

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0270

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 30056

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: FR CH VN CB

SUBJ: FRENCH VIEW OF KAMPUCHEAN DEVELOPMENTS

1. QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA DOPFFER SAID THAT THE QUAI HAD BEEN FOLLOWING CLOSELY THE KHMER STATEMENTS CONNECTED WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE KAMPUCHEAN COMMUNIST PARTY (KCP) AND THE POL POT TRIP TO PEKING AND PYONG YANG. THE FRENCH ARE INTERESTED AS MUCH IN WHAT WAS NOT SAID AS WHAT WAS SAID. THE OFFICIAL VERSION OF THE HISTORY OF THE KCP IS CLEARLY NOT ENTIRELY COMPLETE OR ACCURATE; IN PARTICULAR THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE INDOCHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE ROLE OF THE VIETNAMESE DURING THE EARLY PERIOD OF STRUGGLE (1968-73) WERE CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT. DOPFFER THOUGHT THE PICTURE OF CURRENT CONDITIONS WAS EXCESSIVELY ROSY AND WOULD CONVINCE NO ONE.

2. DOPFFER THOUGHT IT SIGNIFICANT THAT POL POT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED PARTY DISAGREEMENT OVER THE BATTAMBANG UPRISING AND BELIEVED THERE HAD BEEN OTHER PARTY DISPUTES WHICH POL POT HAD SKIPPED. DOPFFER HAD BEEN STRUCK BY THE KOREAN TELEGRAM WHICH HAD
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FELICITATED THE KHMER ON THEIR ELIMINATION OF "IMPERIALIST SPIES" WITHIN THE PARTY, A REFERENCE, THEY BELIEVE, TO A QUITE RECENT PURGE. ALSO THE QUAI HAD LEARNED INDIRECTLY FROM CAMBODIAN REFUGEES THAT THERE HAD BEEN PROBLEMS IN THE PROVINCES THIS PAST SPRING AND SUMMER, POSSIBLY CONNECTED WITH A PARTY PURGE.

3. DOPFFER THOUGHT THERE REMAINED CONSIDERABLE AMBIGUITY IN THE KHMER ATTITUDE TOWARD VIETNAM, AND ONE SHOULD NOT CONCLUDE THAT THE REFERENCES TO DEFENSE OF CAMBODIAN TERRITORY MEANT THAT RELATIONS WERE NECESSARILY BAD BETWEEN PHNOM PENH AND HANOI. DOPFFER NOTED THAT POL POT'S RELINQUISHING THE FUNCTION OF PRIME MINISTER OCCURED IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING HIS INTERVIEW WITH VNA WHICH CONTAINED A RATHER SOFT LINE TOWARD VIETNAM. DOPFFER WONDERED WHETHER POL POT'S TEMPORARY ECLIPSE COULD HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF HIS SOFTER LINE ON RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM, AND HIS REAPPEARANCE NOW SIGNALLED A RETURN TO A MORE MODERATE POLICY CONCERNING THE BORDER DISPUTE. DOPFFER SAID THIS WOULD NOT BE INCONSISTENT WITH A PRIMARY AFFINITY WITH PEKING, AND THE PRC MIGHT ACTUALLY FAVOR A MORE REALISTIC CAMBODIAN POLICY TOWARD ITS POWERFUL INDOCHINESE NEIGHBOR. DOPFFER NOTED THAT THIS THESIS WOULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY THE OPPOSING LINE TAKEN BY ANOTHER FACTION, UNLESS THIS OTHER FACTION WAS CLOSELY TIED TO THE SOVIETS.

4. COMMENT: WE EXPECT THE QUAI WILL FURTHER REFINE ITS VIEWS OF THE CAMBODIAN SITUATION, BUT WE THOUGHT THESE PRELIMINARY COMMENTS MIGHT BE OF ASSISTANCE IN PREPARING FOR THE OCT 24 FRANCO-AMERICAN CONSULTATIONS ON EA.

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